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State Superintendent

DPI VISTA Monthly

November, 2005



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*It seems to me that people have vast potential.
Most people can do extraordinary things if they
have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most
do not. They sit in front of the telly and treat
life as if it goes on forever.*

-Philip Adams



Hello All!

What better time than November to be thankful? Thankful that Quarterly Reports are done, that we will be meeting soon (Regional Meetings), and that we're finally getting adjusted to our sites. We here at DPI are so thankful for all the work you've done, and we'd be thankful for any submissions you have for our newsletters. You'd be surprised at the interest they'll generate! We accept anything from recipes to project ideas.
Have a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

Sites to See:

*<http://www.youthnewsteam.com/>

This site has some interesting stats on parent involvement. It's sure to get you thinking.

* TRY THIS!

ClassNotesOnline.com
This is a free website that connects teachers to parents and students. It's new and it's worth letting your teachers know about!

* <http://www.recycling-fundraiser.com/> This fundraiser can be done in your school for free!



Thank You Nina and Alice!

The time has come to say goodbye to Nina and Alice this month. Alice has served as a VISTA for three years!! and will be ending in November. Thank you so much for all your hard work and dedication.

Nina will also be finishing her year term as a VISTA in November. Thank you too for all that you have done and all your perseverance in your work.

You both will be missed, but your work will live on.



Books to Check Out

* *The End of Poverty*
-Jeffery Sachs

**The Tyranny of Kindness: A Firsthand Account of the Welfare System and What Can Be Done about It*
-Theresa Funicello

**Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*
-Jonathan Kozol

Money Saving Tip of the Month: It's starting to get cold around here, and while the temperature is going down, the price of heating is going up. Let's focus on getting your homes/apartments ready for the winter.

*Make sure there are no drafts from the windows, doors, and especially the sliding glass doors. You can feel with your hand if there is any draft. If you need to and are able, caulk the areas around the window/door.

*If you can't caulk, consider investing in these saran wrap like sheets that you put over the window area. You just hair dry them around the window and the heat activates the adhesive. This will act as an extra protective layer and will help lower your bill. (I had to use them in college.) You can buy them at Walmart.

*If there are rooms you don't use, close them off and don't heat them. If a draft comes from under the door you can make a protector from a really long sock. Just stuff the sock with stuffing or other socks or something and then place your "snake" in front on the crack. Voila!

*Try living with the thermostat a few degrees cooler than you normally do. For every one degree decrease, you will see a 2% savings on your bill. Every bit counts! It is recommended that you keep your residence at 68 during the day and a brisk 55 at night.

*Invest in a little heater and place it in the room you use most. Keep the rest of the house cooler and bring everyone into the room with a heater. It's family bonding time!

*For more energy saving ideas, visit: <http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/>
http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/housing/energy-savers/energy_savers.html

STILL WORRIED ABOUT HEATING COSTS? Look here to see if you qualify for energy assistance. Your VISTA allowance does not count as income for this program. <http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov/>

Book Review: *Empress of the Splendid Season* by Oscar Hijuelos

One of last month's recommended books, *Empress of the Splendid Season* is the story of Lydia Espana, a New York City cleaning woman. Before she moved to New York, Lydia lived in Cuba. She came from a wealthy family and never had to worry about cleaning or cooking. All that changed when she was disowned by her father.

Lydia quickly learns what it's like to be poor and working, but she never forgets who she was. She is thought of as snooty by many of her neighbors that she refuses to associate with because of their low class morals and attitudes. But she has several friends, including the poetic butcher and an old teacher.

She works incredibly hard to try and raise her family with honor and a sense of value. And while she never becomes rich, she does succeed in having successful children.

This novel shows the struggle and labor of one family trying to survive in poverty and gain something better than everyday toil that they have.

For people working with poverty and fighting it, this novel has insight into the world of poverty.



Updated Interview Schedule:

December: Emily Johnson and Jennifer Kutska

January: Edwina Matthews and Lisa Fusco

February: Janice Welsh and Kelly Ranzen

March: Morgana Davis and Kristin Danielson

April: David Curtis and Mary Gutierrez

May: Megan O'Connell and Julie McGonigal

June: Karen Collins and Krista Larson

July: Kathryn Zboralski and Tamilyn Frey

I am still determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances.

-Martha Washington

Action Team FAQs

In an effort to move the Action Team process forward, this monthly feature will answer frequently-asked questions about starting and growing a successful Partnership Action Team.

What questions do you have? Call or e-mail **Ruth Anne Landsverk**, partnerships coordinator at DPI (ruthanne.landsverk@dpi.state.wi.us/608-266-9757).

1. How can I get the first meeting of our school's Action Team off to a successful start?

A: "Communication" is the key word here, and essential for team members to trust and support one another. At the first meeting, establish ground rules for communicating at meetings, making sure every member feels welcome to contribute ideas and observations. Agree to listen and to disagree respectfully, and to solve problems by building consensus. Assign clear responsibilities for the work of the Action Team.

Start and end the meeting on time. Make sure every member has the meeting agenda well ahead of time and schedule meetings, whether once a month

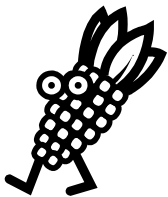
or more often, at a time and place convenient for everyone.

Plan for how meeting minutes will be sent to all members and how the school community will be kept informed about Action Team activities.

Many teams begin with a team-building activity that recognizes members' strengths and abilities (see pp. 207-07 in the *Handbook for Action* for one idea). If your One-Year Action Plan is in place, review the plan and decide what needs to be done by whom to get things going.

If your One-Year Action Plan has not yet made it on paper, decide which 2 or 3 2005-06 school goals are most important for the Action Team to concentrate on this year. Brainstorm on ways to get feedback from parents about what information or assistance is most meaningful to them and how the school can involve families in achieving school goals

Above all, remain child-centered and focused on how the Action Team can communicate with all staff and families about partnership goals and activities. For more ideas for promising initial activities of the Action Team, see pp. 108-111 in the *Handbook for Action* or visit the National Network of Partnership Schools website at www.partnershipschools.org.



Recipe of the Month: Pumpkin Risotto with Spinach and Garlic

3 Tablespoons (T) unsalted butter
3 leeks, white parts only, thinly sliced
3 T olive oil
1 small yellow onion, diced
8 garlic cloves, minced
2 large bunches (about 1 lb. each) fresh spinach

2 c. Arborio or Carnaroli rice
7 to 8 c. vegetable stock
1 c. pumpkin puree
2 T fresh lemon juice
½ c. grated Parmigiano Reggiano or dry Jack
salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat 2 T of butter in small, heavy skillet over medium heat. When the butter begins to foam, add leeks, lower heat and cook leeks until tender and completely wilted, 6-8 min.
2. Heat remaining 1 T of butter and 1 T of the olive oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until soft, about 8 min. Add rice and stir until with wooden spoon until each grain becomes milky, about 2 minutes. Keeping the stock hot over low heat, add stock ½ c. at a time to rice mixture, stirring after each addition until nearly all the liquid is absorbed. Continue to add stock and stir until the rice is tender but not mushy, a total of 18-20 minutes. Before the final addition of stock, stir in the leeks, pumpkin puree and 1 T of the lemon juice.
3. Working quickly, heat the remaining 2 T of olive oil in a skillet or wok over medium heat, add the garlic and sauté for 2 minutes.
4. When the rice is cooked, stir in the cheese. Add the spinach to the sautéing garlic and cook, covered, for 2-3 minutes, until the spinach is just wilted. Taste the risotto and season with salt and pepper.
5. Transfer the risotto to serving plates. Add the remaining 2 T of lemon juice to the spinach, toss the spinach to coat it in the olive oil, garlic and lemon juice and serve alongside the risotto. Serves 6-8.

Opport

Of Interest: While we try to save money, some things just go wrong. Like getting grain moths and then having to throw that food away. I don't know if anyone has gotten them, but it is not nice. So to combat these wily critters all you have to do is add a bay leave to your shelves, or tape it inside your food canister. It won't leave a bay leaf taste in your food. The other thing that is said to work is Bazooka Bubble Gum. Who knew?

The GAP Apply for appreciation cards that can be raffled off at your school
http://www.gapinc.com/public/SocialResponsibility/sr_com_giftcards.shtml from GAP, Banana Republic and Old Navy. This one's worth a shot. And while you're looking at the appreciation card, check out the T-shirt donations link.

Is your school on the Target Take Charge of Education program? Check this program out at: http://target.com/target_group/community_giving/fundraising_rules.jhtml. If your school already has this program, make sure that everyone is aware of it! Target has numerous other grants, so look over the whole site.

TIPS ideas for your school.
http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/tips/sample_tips_prototypes.htm
And looking over them myself, I was drawn to "Hairy Tales." I don't know what it makes you think of, but I think of monster hair/fur. And it reminded me of something we did when I was a wee young lass. For a writing project, the whole class or group would work on writing one story. A monster story. You would start with your drawing of a monster and write a little bit about your monster. Then you would pass your story on to the next person and they would continue your story. And you would continue someone else's. And you would do this until everyone has written and you have lots of totally crazy stories that show how many directions a story can go because the way it ended is surely different from the way the first author envisioned it.

America's Promise

<http://www.americaspromise.org/> This website focuses on community and children.

www.ncpie.org If you search under resources, it will amaze you all they have.

<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/> This site aids in helping adults teach children how to read. Could be pretty useful

Promising Partnership Practices

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/PPP/2005/index.htm>

THIS IS A MUST SEE SITE! It's filled with great ideas for projects. Check it out!

Rapides Foundation Re-Opens Walking Trail Mini-Grant Program

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=107800028

The program is designed to promote regular exercise through the creation of publicly accessible walking trails in both urban and rural settings. The Walking Trails Mini-Grant Program provides support for short-term projects that require no more than \$10,000 in funding support. Each award will be made for a year or less.

Box Tops for Education Launches Kids' Caucus on Parental Involvement in Education

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=119100016 Box Tops for Education has announced the Box Tops for Education Kids' Caucus, an assembly of children, parents, education officials, and members of Congress who will meet to discuss solutions to improving parental involvement in education in the United States.

Lowe's, International Paper, and National Geographic Launch Outdoor Classroom Grant Program

http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/rfp_item.jhtml?id=115900024

Lowe's [Charitable and Educational Foundation](#), [International Paper](#) and the International Paper Foundation, and [National Geographic Explorer](#) classroom magazine have announced an Outdoor Classroom Grant Program to fund outdoor learning environments for K-12 public schools around the United States.



Seasonal Activities



5 Cambridge - Folk Craft Fair. Huge holiday craft fair with 130 Vendors from Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota. Food, bake sale, large raffle & more. High School. Event starts at 9:00AM and ends at 3:00PM. For more information call 608-423-3900.

5 - 6 Tomah - Christmas Bonanza at This Old Barn. Come Experience the Barn in its Christmas Finery, experience Christmas Caroling, Horse Drawn Sleigh Rides, Warm Apple Cider, and Santa. This Old Barn, 16005 Holiday Road. For more information call (608) 374-3330.

11 - 13 Kohler - Wisconsin Holiday Market. Over 100 vendors feature their creative works throughout The American Club. Unique Christmas decorations and gifts in a glittering old-fashioned holiday market setting. The American Club. For more information call 800-344-2838.

Nov 11 - Jan 5 Brule - Oulu Glass Glassblowing Demonstrations. Daily glassblowing demonstrations at Oulu Glass Studio. Call ahead to ensure availability. Oulu. For more information call (715) 372-4160.

12 Madison - Herb Fair. Browse through displays of herbal foods, crafts, and books for sale. Sponsored by the Madison Herb Society. Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Event starts at 8:30AM and ends at 4:30PM. For more information call (608) 242-1664.

Nov 15 - Jan 15 Appleton - Victorian Christmas: Under the Tree. Take a guided tour of the first home lit by hydroelectricity and see the stunning Christmas decorations. Hearthstone again invites local schools to participate in creating Victorian style Christmas tree ornaments to decorate the trees sponsored by area businesses. The theme this year looks at what Victorians put under their Christmas tree from villages to nativities. Hearthstone Historic House Museum. For more information call (920) 730-8204.

Nov 18 - Dec 31 Elkhart Lake - "Adornment" at Two Fish Gallery. A holiday gift show featuring the work of over 50 regional and national artists. For more information call 920-876-3192.

19 Baraboo - Holly Jolly Light Parade. Fifty lighted floats, novelty units and musical groups kick off the holiday season with this Christmas-themed parade. Pre-parade entertainment and refreshments and post-parade visits with Santa Claus. Downtown. Event starts at 6:00PM. For more information call 888-356-7995.

Nov 23 - Jan 1 Oshkosh - Celebration of Lights. Beautiful Menominee Park decked out in holiday lights. Drive through this winter wonderland - it will amuse and delight the entire family. Menominee Park. Event starts at 6:00PM and ends at 10:00PM. For more information call (877) 303-9200.

Nov 24 - Jan 1 Chippewa Falls - Christmas Village in Irvine Park. The day after Thanksgiving Irvine Park takes on a whole new look, illuminated with over 75,000 Christmas lights which turns the park into the Christmas Village. Life-size Christmas scenes reminiscent of the Victorian era and local historical replicas. Irvine Park. For more information call (715) 723-0051.

Nov 25 - Dec 31 La Crosse - Rotary Lights. More than one million lights illuminate La Crosse's Riverside Park. Among the splendor is a 140 foot Christmas tree, computerized drive through tunnel, live entertainment on select nights, hayrides, carriage rides and animated light displays that fill the park. Over two million visitors have enjoyed this special holiday experience. Wisconsin's largest holiday lighting display on the banks of the Mississippi River. Riverside Park. For more information call 800-658-9424.

Nov 27 - Dec 4 Kenosha - Christmas at Kemper/Gallery of Trees. The historic Durkee Mansion and the Anderson Arts Center will feature holiday trees and decorations. The Christmas at Kemper Opening Gala takes place November 26 from 6-10pm at the Anderson Arts Center. Kemper Center and Anderson Arts Center. For more information call 262-657-6005.

December 2 - 11 Elkhart Lake - Old World Christmas Market. Traditional German Christkindlesmarket featuring European and regional vendors displaying hand-carved wooden toys, blown

glass ornaments and giftware. 101 Osthoff Ave. Event starts at 11:00AM and ends at 6:00PM. For more

information call 800-876-3399.



Looking for an Inexpensive Way to Make Your Place Smell Great? Make this Gingerbread Dough (DO NOT EAT) and place it around your home. Or, give it as a gift.

You will need:

3 T shorting	$\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ c. molasses
1 tsp. baking soda	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. flour	1 tsp. cloves (g)
1 tsp. ginger (g)	1 tsp. cinn. (g)	$\frac{3}{4}$ c. water
(g)=ground		



1. Cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add molasses.
2. Mix dry ingredients together and add to shortening mixture alternatively with the water by dividing each into three parts.
3. Dough will be stiff; don't worry.
4. Refrigerate overnight.
5. Preheat oven to 350
6. Divide dough into 3 sections, knead to warm and roll out until about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick
7. Cut into desired shapes, use a straw to make holes for string if desire
8. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Let dry out for 3 days (cooling rack is fine). Voila, potpourri!

Reminder! This month we have Regional Meetings!

Nov. 8th: Northwest

Nov. 16th: Northeast

Nov. 15th: Southeast

Nov. 17th: Southwest



Happy Birthday!

Nov. 2: Edwina

Nov. 9: Krista

Nov. 29: Megan



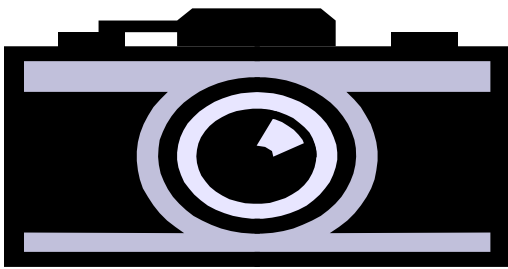


Photo Op! Does your site have a digital camera (and are you able to use it)? We need you to take pictures to display at the 2006 Family-School-Community Partnership Conference in March. So remember to take a picture when you do projects, write a little blurb about it, and send it in.

Interview with Lorrie and Shoshannah

L1: *Where were you born and where have you lived growing up?*

S: I was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin. I grew up in the burbs otherwise known as Waukesha, But my family grew up in Milwaukee. I always felt that was my other home.

S1: *What interested you in becoming a VISTA?*

L: I didn't set out to be a VISTA but saw an ad in the paper that seemed to fit so closely with my lifestyle. I volunteered at school and in the community, and was very involved and interested in the lives of my children and their friends. It seemed that the opening for a VISTA in our school district and our community was a little bit like fate.

L2: *If you were a flower, what kind and color would you want to be?*

S: This is a different one. Okay. If I were a flower, I would want to be a Gerber daisy. The peachy-orange color. They are one of my favorite flowers, and I love them. Gerber daisies always look great. They are merry, classy and beautiful.

S2: *Reflecting on your own personal journey, would you have changed anything?*

L: I don't think I would have changed anything. I don't have an amazing career, or some kind of title, but, I am surrounded by people who are giving, compassionate, understanding, nonjudgmental and genuine - I am very satisfied with what I am able to accomplish and what I will leave behind and everything that I have done, has happened to me, and the people that left their mark on me have made me what I am today. I know that I am where I am supposed to be right now.

L3: *Of all the things you do as a VISTA, what is the most fulfilling to you?*

S: One of the most fulfilling parts of my VISTA work is working with the student leadership groups. Our student council has been very active with two drives under our belts this year, as well as a bake sale. And now I am looking forward to implementing a volunteer program for the students at a local food pantry and senior center!

S3: *What has been the highlight so far for you as a VISTA?*

L: Realizing that I am a lifelong learner and that is okay. It is almost necessary when you are a VISTA. If you stop looking for something to learn, you won't be able to bring new ideas to your site.

L4: *Do you have any brothers or sisters? If so, what are their ages and what are they doing now?*

S: I have one brother, Josh. He is 19. He's going to WCTC Technical College for automotive or to be an electrician. He hasn't decided yet.

S4: *What's your favorite book?*

L: To Kill a Mockingbird. Actually, I should say Runaway Bunny. That is what I read to both of my children from the Day they were born until they begged me not to read it to them any more.

L5: Do you have any definite plans for when your VISTA year is complete?

S: Definite plans! Well, yes and no. I am looking to continue working on the Southside of Milwaukee either for a non-profit or at a school. I might do those or I might go into teaching or do community outreach and support. Currently, I am doing the leg work for my law degree. I am doing all that fun application work now. I am looking forward to focusing my talents in public interest law and getting a master's in public policy or non-profit management. The sky is the limit.

S5: What is your favorite cuisine?

L: I love comfort food like roast beef and mashed potatoes, or roasted chicken. And not only do I like to eat it, I like to prepare it as well. There is something so satisfying about being the person who brings the food to the table that enables friends and family to sit around the table and enjoy a meal and conversation together. Comfort food is good for that.

L6: Did you dress up for Halloween this year? If yes, as what?

S: Yes! I love Halloween. You get to be super creative, and you can show off your sassy side as well. I was an eccentric fortune teller. Let me tell you your future....

S6: What has presented itself as an opportunity (a place to learn from) with your vista work?

L: There are so many things. But, I would have to say the most important is how lucky I have been to be involved with UWEX. My supervisor and the rest of the office have always included me in opportunities to learn, workshops, WISlines and more. I have learned so much from all of them. All of the knowledge I have received through UWEX has made me so much more aware of the needs of our community and the students in our schools.

L7: When you tell people that you are a VISTA, do you find that there is a lot of explaining to do along with that answer?

S: Of course, not many people are familiar with the title, but once I tell them it's like the domesticated Peace Corps, then I have a starting point to explain. It is a wonderful opportunity to explain what VISTA is and help broaden perspectives.

S7: What was your most eye-opening VISTA moment?

L: Learning about poverty, what it means to people, and how it is everywhere in different ways. I never knew there was such a thing as generational poverty before that. It is so interesting and eye opening.

L8: Growing up, can you remember what your favorite Halloween costume was?

S: My favorite Halloween costume was when I was a senior in high school. I dressed up as an 80's rocker. It's crazy that those fads have come back.

S8: What are your plans after VISTA?

L: I want to take classes for Service Learning and mentoring. They are both something I wish I could be more involved in.

L9: What is your greatest wish for your site?

S: I hope that the programs in existence at Forest Home Avenue Elementary will be sustainable. I also hope that others will continue the good work and improve upon the current programs as this is the school's last year of VISTA.

S9: If you could turn back time, would you change the beginning of your service in any way?

L: Yes. I would have asked for a past VISTA that was in the same situation as I so I could get advice. A mentor.

L10: What will you be thankful for this Thanksgiving?

S: There really are a lot of things to be thankful for. Especially family, friends, and good health. In addition, I have been given this opportunity to work here at Forest Home Avenue School. I am thankful for this opportunity because I have learned a great deal, continued some great work, and most importantly, I have benefited the life of students here. Finally, I am thankful for having a wonderful crew from MKE to work with and to continue to support one another in our VISTA endeavors and beyond!

S10: What advice would you give to your fellow VISTAs?

L: There are lots of resources offered by the DPI and the Corporation for National Service. Take advantage of all that while it is there for you. Whatever you need: keep looking and asking. One of your fellow VISTAs or DPI staff will have the answer and may have even been in your situation at one time.